

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 1 and 7 and ADD new claim 13 in accordance with the following:

1. (Currently Amended) An image data processing apparatus comprising:
 - a first apparatus which enters image data with embedded stegano data that cannot be recognized visually, the first apparatus sending the entered image data to the outside and receiving ~~the a~~ a result of processing from the outside ~~for and~~ and holding the same; and
 - a second apparatus which effects data processing on the image data received from the first apparatus to acquire stegano data, the second apparatus sending the acquired stegano data as ~~the a~~ a result of processing to the first apparatus.
2. (Original) The image data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first apparatus comprises:
 - an image data input unit which enters image data with stegano data embedded;
 - a data sending unit which sends the entered image data to the outside;
 - a result data receiving unit which receives the processed result data from the second apparatus; and
 - a result holding unit which holds the received result data, wherein the second apparatus comprises:
 - an image data receiving unit which receives image data from the first apparatus;
 - a data holding unit which holds the received image data;
 - an image data processing unit which effects processing on image data to acquire stegano data; and
 - a result data sending unit which sends the acquired stegano data as result data to the first apparatus, and wherein
 - a communication path always or intermittently connects the first apparatus and the second apparatus.
3. (Original) The image data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the

second apparatus converts the acquired stegano data into other information, for sending as result data to the first apparatus, and wherein the first apparatus sends the result data received from the second apparatus to an external third apparatus, for receiving another result of processing.

4. (Original) The image data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first apparatus includes a pre-processing unit which executes pre-processing of the entered image data, the pre-processing being part of image processing to be performed on the side of the second apparatus.

5. (Original) The image data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first apparatus splits the entered image data into a plurality of areas, to send some of the split image data to the second apparatus, and wherein the second apparatus effects image processing on the some image data received from the first apparatus, the second apparatus, if stegano data cannot be acquired, sequentially requesting the first apparatus to make a re-transfer, for image processing, of image data of the remaining split areas until the second apparatus acquires stegano data.

6. (Original) The image data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first apparatus compresses image data entered and held, for sending to the second apparatus, and wherein the second apparatus restores the compressed image data received from the first apparatus, for effecting image processing.

7. (Currently Amended) An image data processing method comprising the steps of:
by a first apparatus, entering image data with embedded stegano data that cannot be recognized visually and sending the image data to a second apparatus;
by ~~a~~ the second apparatus, effecting data processing on the image data received from the first apparatus, to acquire stegano data; and
by the second apparatus, sending the acquired stegano data as a result of processing to the first apparatus; and
by the first apparatus, receiving and holding the result data received from the second apparatus.

8. (Original) The image data processing method according to claim 7, wherein the

second apparatus converts the acquired stegano data into another information and sends the converted data as a result data to the first apparatus, and wherein the first apparatus sends the result data received from the second apparatus to an external third apparatus to receive another result of processing therefrom.

9. (Original) The image data processing method according to claim 7, wherein the first apparatus executes pre-processing of the entered image data, the pre-processing being part of image processing to be performed on the side of the second apparatus.

10. (Original) The image data processing method according to claim 7, wherein
the first apparatus splits the entered image data into a plurality of areas and
sends some of the split image data to the second apparatus, and wherein
the second apparatus effects image processing on the some image data received
from the first apparatus, the second apparatus, if stegano data cannot be acquired, sequentially
requesting the first apparatus to make a re-transfer, for image processing, of the remaining split
areas of the image data until the second apparatus acquires stegano data.

11. (Original) The image data processing method according to claim 7, wherein the first
apparatus compresses the image data entered and held, for sending to the second apparatus,
and wherein the second apparatus restores the compressed image data received from the first
apparatus, for effecting image processing.

12. (Original) An apparatus comprising:
an image data input unit which enters image data with stegano data embedded;
a data sending unit which sends the entered image data to the outside;
a result data receiving unit which receives stegano data as result data from the
outside; and
a result holding unit which holds the received result data.

13. (New) A data processing method, comprising:
entering image data with stegano data embedded;
sending the entered image data to the outside;
receiving stegano data as result data from the outside; and
holding the received result data.